~~INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT~~
FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
May 5, 1985

JMS

Sometime in the middle of a reception which was held on April 17, greeting a room full of officers and members of Fourth Presbyterian Church, and feeling their love for the church and high hopes for its future, the abstraction became a reality for Sue and for me. It appeared that we were actually coming to Chicago. In the search process, as it is designed by Presbyterians, the principle parties learn the art of keeping the realities safely abstract. But that day, and supremely, this day, the reality of this new thing became gloriously concrete.

We, and you, experience a kaleidescope of emotions. today. We can't help recalling a warm September day in 1959, somehow managing to come across Northern Indiana and into the city and onto Lake Shore Drive at 5:00 p.m.: our first exposure to the city, and finally finding a place to pull over to gather our resources and courage, and Sue opening the door and a plant we had carried from Pennsylvania falling out, and our kneeling to gather it up and saying ~~if we can do this, surely the plant will make it as well, and these~~ that though we were very young and very frightened, in God's good providence, we would be given what we needed.

that we felt a little like that plant - gathering it back in its container & saying - if we can do this - the plant can too ~~accept~~.

But as if it were yesterday we recall the sense that it's

And another memory is near the surface as well: this one just four months ago, January 11, to be precise, a cold Friday afternoon, and we were back in Chicago, this time to talk to the Pastor Search Committee of this church, and we were ushered into this magnificent space and Morgan Simmons just happened to be at the organ, and our hosts + hostess asked us for a favorite hymn and I said "Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty," and Mr. Simmons played it strongly and I recalled those words in the second verse . . .

> Hast thou not seen, how thy desires e'er have been granted in what He ordaineth?

And standing in this sanctuary we recalled that day long ago and the steadfastness of the grace and providence God gives and we trusted, deeply, that somehow God's will does get done even in the courts and bureaucracy and committee structures of the church.

I will have much more to say on other occasions about the meaning the city has for us, and I fear I will risk boring you with the motif. Allow me now to say how delighted we are to be here and how we look forward to all that lies ahead.

made a confession - that he was scared ... some things never change. He went on to say that he wasn't nearly as scared as is other people in the congregation - that hasn't changed either - The 18 members of the PNC must be experiencing this in a most frightful way

I have done some research and I have confirmed the fact ~~was told~~ that on his first Sunday in this pulpit, Dr. Elam Davies ~~said that he was full of fear and trepidation, but that there were several people in the congregation more afraid and full of more trepidation than he; namely~~ - the Pastor Nominating Committee ~~Some things, of course,~~ never change.

However, I was touched to read the prayer on the front of the bulletin for the Sunday of the congregational meeting which asked God to look graciously on this church in that important hour. Please join me - in this important hour in a similar prayer.

when you voted to extend call

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your church. As we worship and work and pray and serve together, bless us. as we begin this journey together, grant us to grow in faith and in discipleship.

Almighty God, giver of every good gift, look graciously on your church now as you have in the past. We give thanks for all who have gone before, and for the privilege of our ministry in this new day. As we begin this journey ~~together~~, bless us. As we begin to worship and work and pray together, grant us to grow in faith. Equip all of us for our ministry of service in your church and in the world you love so much: ~~through Jesus Christ our Lord.~~ Amen.) Startle us, O God - wl your word - & open us to your spirit - that hearing - we may also obey through JC